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THE WEEK 131
SOCIALISM AND SOCIALISM George H. Dunne 134
THE STAGE Kappo Phelan 140
THE SCREEN Philip T. Hartung 141
WITHIN AND WITHOUT: GEORGE MACDONALD Anne Fremantle 142
BOOKS OF THE WEEK 146
*Our Father's House—Pascal and His Sister Jacqueline—The Bostonians—Question of Henry James—Floristan—John Henry Newman*

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## *The Ultimate Weapon*

SOME MONTHS ago a rather silly editorial, later published in advertisements reprinting it from the weekly in which it first appeared, and then expanded into a small book, rang the changes on the idea that the atomic bomb had rendered everything we know "obsolete." Thus man, philosophy, literature—all are obsolete. This, of course, is sheer balderdash and gasconade. How we love to catch a big, shocking adjective and then stick it onto all the nice nouns—with the object of scaring the living daylights out of people and getting ourselves the reputation of being profound! But if exaggeration to the point of nonsense is a useful pedagogical device, let all the editorial writers in the world say anything they want, if only it will make men realize that the atomic bomb is not just a new weapon but a thing to change the face of the earth—both literally and figuratively. If it is used, we need have no concern. The face of the earth will be changed, and it will take substantially no intelligence on anybody's part to do it. If it is not to be used, we shall have to do an extremely intelligent thing—realize that absolute national sovereignty is dead and act (not talk) appropriately. Never has mankind been confronted with a clearer and more strict alternative. Very few men, very few men of state, seem yet to realize it.

It is so easy to comfort oneself, to lull one's mind with old saws. For every weapon there is a counter-weapon. For the atomic bomb no less a person than General Arnold assures us there is only one counter-weapon—the atomic bomb. Our only defense, he calmly tells us, is to release our own bombs over any nation we think may be planning to release theirs over us. This would be a nice atmosphere, ambiance, climate in which to live what could be called a "peaceful" national life only in irony or in abjectly excessive courtesy.

There is a defense against the atomic bomb. It is simple. It consists of creating a world power, a world state, a world law-giving body, with the bureaucracy and police force necessary to make it function, which could genuinely legislate regarding matters of this sort. Supposing that the rights and powers of such a body were confined within the limits of the strictest of constitutions, this prospect constitutes no dreadful nightmare. Quite the opposite. Its existence could readily mark the beginning of humanity's best flowering and fruitfulness. Yet our obsession with the sovereign state makes us frightened and timid, makes us shy away from talking seriously about such things lest somehow we offend against modesty and the established code of manners. Of course the attempt to achieve such a world power might fail. Were it to require a civil war for its final establishment, as was the case with our own American Federal Union, it would by definition fail, for that civil war would inevitably be fought in terms of atom bombs. But to foresee difficulties is by no means to condemn the proposal, since the only alternative is to admit defeat and, if one has any individual desire to survive, to settle down in some rural nook which no one on earth would even waste a few ounces of atomic material to disintegrate. In fact, if we do not wish to be morally guilty of suicide, the establishment of such a world power is the only thing left to us.

We hear plaintive voices suggesting that the use of the atom bomb be outlawed. We remember faintly the earnest ladies who, after the last world conflict, talked about "outlawing war." So often have we heard the argument that if private dueling can be stamped out, then surely war can likewise be made a crime. We have succeeded in eliminating poison gas and dumdum bullets—or to a large extent we have done so. Why not extend the process? To argue thus is to argue with words and not with realities. It took years of effort on the part of strong governments and of societies overwhelmingly resolved to abolish dueling, supported by strong governments, to do away with this relatively minor evil custom. As for international conventions governing the use of weapons, we conveniently forget that they have worked only under one very narrow set of conditions: that the weapon to be outlawed offers no nation a sufficiently decisive military edge to warrant taking the risk of the inevitable reprisals. Thus the use of dumdum bullets could not make



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enough tactical difference to justify the suffering which would be incurred by our own forces if the enemy were to use this weapon in reprisal. Throughout most of the second world war the same could be said of poison gas. But note well that the moment we saw a tactical advantage outweighing the disadvantages of reprisals, we began talking about using it. And note also that we seem completely to have forgotten conventions about bombing centers of civilian population. Of all weapons ever devised, the atomic bomb is least subject to outlawry except by a genuine world legislative body, with a police force to back it up, for of all weapons it is the one which can give immediate and final tactical advantage to him who first uses it in massive maneuver. Once he has used it so, he need fear no reprisals. For where he has used it will be the most terrible desert this world has ever seen, beyond power of reprisal, beyond hope, beyond life.

### *East Indies Outlook*

THE current report that a "moderate" has emerged as a leader of the Indonesians is the first heartening word in weeks from the embattled island of Java. The spectacle of British troops mowing down fanatical Javanese nationalists in the streets of Soerabaja has troubled many. The fact that the uprising was apparently instigated by the Japanese has done little to mitigate the feeling of outrage that once again in the name of empire comparatively unarmed colonial peoples were being put to slaughter. Yet the situation is complex.

Britain has been holding on, not for the sake of the Dutch, but out of solidarity of colonial empire. If the Dutch possessions go, the British know that their possessions cannot long remain possessions either. Their efforts to preserve their empire are not so much inspired by British national pride as by an instinct of self-preservation. Without colonial markets and raw materials and the shipping involved in their transport Britain is doomed economically. Her problem is to delay and direct the impulse to national self-determination so that when each colony does attain dominion or even more autonomous status it will still function as an integral part of the British trade system. Obviously one of the requirements is that the economy of each colony shall be in working, not chaotic condition.

The island of Java, for its part, is the most densely populated area in the world. If under the impulse of a desire for independence it should break away completely from the European trade orbit, the results would be disastrous. An "Asia for Asiatics" policy of this sort would have the gravest economic repercussions even in this country.

Shall we, therefore, be content with the thought that the British have been shooting down the Indonesians for their own good and let it go at that? So comforting a speculation is redolent of old school debates as to the justification for colonial empires. No, we have to admit that the problem today is in different terms. For we all now subscribe to the principle that peoples should enjoy sufficient autonomy not to be coerced by other peoples. And we also realize that every people in the modern world is irretrievably connected with every other people. Fragmentation or cutting off into airtight blocs does irreparable damage to all.

The Indonesian extremists complain that three centuries of Dutch rule have resulted in so little progress toward independence that the natives are not yet held capable of any real degree of political autonomy. Why, then, if the Dutch—aided by the British—return, should the Indonesians expect any progress toward their aspirations? A pertinent question. Queen Wilhelmina's solemn promise of dominion status is the only practical reply. It fits in well with the new Indonesian leader's reported willingness to treat with the Dutch government. If more native leaders would realize, with Sutan Sjahrir, that physical "attacks on foreigners prove to the outside world that we are not a united people and that we are not politically mature," there would be less difficulty in agreeing upon a series of steps leading to virtual independence. But the initiative still remains squarely with the colonial powers. Fair promises coupled with increasing subjugation will no longer work. The colonial peoples of the world are too politically conscious to be fooled any longer in this wise. The Powers must recognize that independence is inevitable and publicly subscribe to the furtherance of that objective. They must hasten rather than obstruct the progressive emancipation of the peoples they have so long exploited. In the interests of these peoples as well as in their own, these Powers must build up colonial economies in union with their own. Only then is there *any* justification for the bloody suppression which has recently been reported in the Dutch East Indies.

### *Camera*

AFTER dinner we turned the lights down and the little figures, the black boy Willie Joyce, the white boy Allie Stolz (from Newark) fought ten rounds in Madison Square Garden and we sat there drinking coffee and watched them fight. The sound track was good and you could hear the blows as they landed; you could hear the crowd but the camera was focused on the ring because the lights were focused on the ring. Also you could get up and go over to the television screen

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and put your hand in front of the little dancing boxers and they would disappear, or you could turn a button and turn the whole thing off.

When you are at a newsreel in a theater whatever is happening has happened; there is no use hoping for something else to happen; it's all there on the print; all the fights in Madison Square Garden are on the newsreel prints and so is the war in the Pacific and the war in Europe. It has all happened; the announcer has announced the winner. With television you can turn the whole thing off but that does not do much good because what is happening is happening whether you look at it or not, and you will run across a newspaper somewhere sometime and what has been happening will be there in words, or there will be a picture and you will find out that Willie Joyce lost the fight, we won the war, and so forth and so on, and that people in Poland were hungry twenty-four hours before the New York *Times* went to press.

The *Times* (November 13) had a two page spread of reports about conditions in Europe and that makes a great many words. The correspondents who had been reporting the war, who reported the victory, now are reporting what the war and the victory have done to Europe. "More than 20,000,000 desperate and homeless people are now milling east and west, north and south across the continent. Germans pour westward into the devasted Reich from Slavdom, Poles and Czechs moving hard upon their heels into vacated towns. Hungarians trudge into the Pannonian Plain. . . . Hundreds and hundreds of thousands of former nazi slaves crowd into freight cars and trucks and rusty ships on uncertain voyages to their uneasy homes. . . . But the resistance of Europe is low. Tuberculosis is rife. The very young and the very old especially are beginning to die in droves as the autumn leaves fall. . . . The terrible example of Poland is perhaps the worst among the victor nations. . . . More than three-quarters of a million Poles are facing the inception of winter in holes, dugouts and hovels of an indescribable nature and this miserable number is likely soon to increase. . . . Ten thousand are dying monthly of tuberculosis." (C. L. Sulzberger.)

And Gladwin Hill: "Warsaw health authorities estimate that at least 100,000 bodies are still in the ruins, breeding rats. . . . Poland has left fewer than 6,000 doctors—one to 3,500 persons compared to one to 700 in the United States."

There is no use looking at Poland and thinking of Russia. ("Moscow: There is no doubt that hardships confront the Russians this winter. More than 1,700 towns and 70,000 villages were destroyed or severely damaged, more than 6,000,000 buildings were destroyed and 25,000,000 persons were made homeless.") There is no use looking at France saying that France is better off than Italy, or at Belgium, which is better off than the Netherlands. There is no use looking anywhere if it is to make comparisons. With the winter coming the differences are not great enough. All you can do is to look anywhere, at any point in Europe, turn the camera anywhere (the profiteers won't pose for you) and it does not matter what image of what men or women in whatever country gets on to the film, or of what children, because it does not matter what language they speak or what names they have or where they have come from or where they are going; they are in misery.

## *Press Notes*

THE *Catholic Labor Observer* of 450 Abbott Road, Buffalo 20, N. Y., has been started by the diocesan labor school there. It is edited by Monsignor John P. Boland, former chairman of the New York State Labor Relations Board, and is published bi-weekly. It adds to the circle of increasingly influential Catholic labor organs such as the *Wage Earner* of Detroit, *Work* of Chicago and the *Labor Leader* of New York.

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The New York *Herald Tribune* for November 12 announces that food packages ordered in various stores throughout the nation which have made the necessary arrangements with the Prince Company will be delivered to European civilians within ten days. In New York, for instance, Gimbel's and Lewis and Conger provide this service. The least expensive package costs $7.75 for Denmark, Finland, Holland and Norway, $8.75 for Austria, Belgium, France and Poland.

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The *Call,* weekly organ of the Socialist Party, USA, has set up an International Solidarity Committee, Room 516, 303 Fourth Avenue, New York 10, N. Y., supplying names, addresses and instructions for sending needed food packages to socialists and other European anti-fascists.

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The *National Union Farmer* of Denver, Colorado, reports that "prospects of the Farm Security Administration are brighter now than in several years." Senator Bankhead of Alabama has introduced a bill (S 1507) "the most significant legislative proposal affecting FSA since the original Bankhead-Jones Act." In order to strengthen family-type farming as intended the bill must be backed up by adequate Congressional appropriations. Passage is said to be advocated by virtually all the war veterans' organizations for it provides for the loans needed by returning servicemen to acquire farm land.

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# *Socialism and Socialism*

## Why Christian Democrats and Socialists should get along

*George H. Dunne*

IT IS necessary now to examine the question of Socialism. It has long been evident that the shape of things to come in Europe, and perhaps beyond Europe, is socialist.

It is difficult to understand how anyone could have imagined that with the day of liberation there would come pouring out of the cellars and the dark alley-ways and the concealed meeting places and the hidden printing houses and down from the mountains and out from the forests an army of capitalists bent upon restoring the old order of things that had preceded conquest. The army of the underground that fought to keep alive the ideals of honor and freedom during the sullen days of the occupation did not draw its recruits principally from the ranks of financiers and industrialists. Nor was the nature of the struggle, forging out of necessity a new sense of social solidarity among the combatants, such as to breed a new and anachronistic race of disciples of Adam Smith.

Neither should anyone have imagined that the people of Britain, once victory had been won, would repudiate the new sense of solidarism, born in the community of struggle, in favor of the return to a fragmented society the individualism of which has proved too rugged to be endured. Whatever hopes Mr. Churchill harbored along these lines were crushed by the British elections.

So now the shape of things to come is clear. In nearly every country in Euope the régime that emerges will be committed to a program that can be roughly described as socialist.

This means that the relationship between Catholicism and Socialism has become a problem fraught with enormous and immediate practical importance. If the people of Europe are to have an opportunity to work in peace and harmony toward the building of a decent human society, the hostility that has traditionally characterized that relationship must be dissolved. Otherwise, instead of the reasonable unity which is absolutely essential if the common good is to be achieved on that pain-wracked continent, an atmosphere of friction, discord and bitterness will be distilled which can generate nothing but conflict.

The people of Europe have had enough of bloodshed, enough of violence, enough of agony. They deserve peace. They must have peace. It would be the supreme irony, an irony not to be endured, if they should have been delivered from the long ordeal of international anarchy only to be subjected to the more bitter ordeal of internecine strife.

The common struggle in the underground proved that it is possible for groups whose differences were thought to be irreconcilable to unite on a higher level in the prosecution of a common goal. There is nothing in the nature of things which makes it inevitable that these groups must now return to the lower levels of divisive conflict and sow again all the old seeds of rancor, suspicion and distrust. If this happens it will be a tragedy. And it will be inexcusable, because it is not unavoidable. When the doctrinaire character of Socialism was far more pronounced than it is today, the Center Party and the Socialists found it possible to cooperate loyally in their successful fight against Bismarck's Folk Laws and his *Kulturkampf*.

If the higher unity is to be maintained, intelligence and good will will be required both on the part of Catholics and on the part of Socialists. Catholics will have to understand Socialism better than they have understood it in the past. Socialists will have to understand Catholicism better than they have understood it in the past.

What has to be understood about Socialism is that it has embraced two different things and in varying proportions: a philosophy about man and society, and a program for the economic reorganization of society for the purpose of assuring a just distribution of this world's goods. The philosophy was not essential to the program, nor was the program a logical derivative of the philosophy. There have been many socialist movements, of non-marxist inspiration, which were largely or entirely innocent of the philosophy. But the main current of modern Socialism, which calls itself scientific as distinguished from utopian, has been marxist in character. It is one of the tragedies of modern history that the Fathers of this, the most influential kind of Socialism, insisted that philosophy and program were inseparable.

If the Fathers of Socialism had been content to build their program upon their generally sound intuitions about the social nature of man and the solidarity of the human race, there need never



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have been any serious conflict between Socialism and Catholicism. Unfortunately they were doctrinaires who liked to philosophize and they were poor philosophers. Their speculations were unhappily influenced by the superficial rationalism in vogue in their day. They were further confirmed in their bias by the all too frequent association of various churchmen with reactionary persons and causes. As a consequence they developed a sophomoric attitude towards belief in God and formulated a doctrine about man and society which was materialistic, anthropocentric and anti-religious.

Obviously Catholicism could not join hands with that kind of philosophy, with that kind of doctrine. Catholicism's opposition to Socialism was an opposition to its philosophy about man and society. This is what must be understood about Catholicism. Otherwise the question of its relationship to Socialism will be lost in a miasmic fog of confusion.

The whole question is confused enough as it is. A major factor contributing to the confusion has been the tendency of Socialists to think of their doctrine in terms of program. Thus their views about marriage, about the family, about religious education, about religion itself, properly belonged to their philosophy. Yet Socialists have made these doctrinal views part of their social program and have really planned to impose them upon society. It was easy for them to indulge these fancies so long as they were a small minority party not charged with responsibility. But in the measure that they have been formed to assume responsibility and to deal with reality the doctrinaire character of these views has become more and more evident.

As a result, these features of Socialism have tended to seek their proper level, which is doctrinal rather than programatic. It has become increasingly possible, therefore, to distinguish between program and doctrine and by program to mean chiefly the Socialist proposals for the economic reorganization of society. It is in terms of this development that it is correct to say that the hostility between Catholicism and Socialism was rooted in Socialist doctrine rather than in Socialist program.

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The Socialist economic program, centering around the concept of community ownership of at least the major instrumentalities of production, is not the peculiar property of the Socialist Party. What is peculiar to the Socialist Party is its doctrine and its doctrinaire assumption that its economic program is inseparable from its doctrine. I have attempted throughout this article to keep this distinction clear by capitalizing Socialism and Socialist only when referring to the Party itself, or to its doctrine, or to its program but specifically as pertaining to the Party. Wherever reference is made simply to a program of social reform centered upon the ideal of community ownership, capitalization is not employed. Used in this latter way the word socialism includes, but is not synonymous with, the economic program of the Socialist Party, though not *qua* Socialist Party.

The fact is that long before modern theories of Socialism were born the Church had been familiar with economics organized along socialist lines. This was notably true in Spain during the later Middle Ages. These economies not only had not aroused the hostility of the Church, they had been encouraged by the Church and were developed under the leadership of Catholic monks and priests. There is no evidence that these programs aroused the slightest sense of surprise or shock in the Catholic environment of the times. There is every evidence, on the contrary, that they were regarded as natural derivatives in the economic order of the Catholic concept of the social nature of man, the social function of property, and the unity of man in the Mystical Body of Christ. They were surely far more native to Catholic soil than the philosophy and predatory system of utilitarian individualism which supplanted them. This is why one of the ironies of modern times has been the spectacle of Catholics bitterly opposing certain measures of social reform deeply rooted in Christian tradition and instinct simply because they were also espoused by Socialists.

Catholics have not been altogether to blame for this. The blame is shared by the Socialists who, although there was no logical connection between the two, tied their program up with a doctrine that explicitly repudiated Christianity. Typical of their doctrinaire attitude was August Bebel's dictum: "Christianity and Socialism are like fire and water." In view of this attitude it is naive to ask why the Church regarded Socialism as a mortal enemy. It is also naive to expect Catholics always to distinguish carefully between the Socialist program and doctrine since the Socialists themselves so hopelessly confused the two. Because the doctrine was avowedly and militantly anti-Christian it was easy to conclude that whatever pertained to the program was equally tainted. And because the utilitarians paid at least lip service to religion it was easy for Catholics to succumb to the illusion that the economic philosophy to which they adhered was somehow or other identified with Christianity.

Because they were preoccupied with their anti-religious doctrine, the Socialists themselves discredited the constructive features of their program. They dissipated energies which might have been better spent in carrying on their fight for social justice in a disastrous effort to secularize society and to substitute a shallow rationalism for

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the deepness of Christian faith. The Radical-Socialist party of France illustrates to what nadirs of confused folly this tendency descended. The Radical-Socialists had nothing in common with Socialism except a militant anti-Catholicism and a cheap rationalism. As far as their social and economic program was concerned they were not Socialists but bourgeois utilitarians.

It was because of their foolish fascination with their anti-religious doctrine which tended constantly to become part of their program, that a Charles Péguy who was socialist because he was at heart profoundly Christian was forced to repudiate the Socialists because he was at heart profoundly Christian.

A major difficulty for Catholics in this whole question arises from the pronouncement of Pope Pius XI: "No one can be at the same time a sincere Catholic and a true Socialist." But here one must be extremely careful not to confuse labels with things. One can easily conclude from these words—as many have—that the hostility between the two is fixed and immutable and that even an effort to explore the possibilities of a rapprochement smacks of disobedience. Yet it is perfectly clear from the whole context of the discussion of this question in *Quadragesimo Anno* that what Pius XI condemns as irreconcilable with Catholicism is the Socialist doctrine about man and society, not the Socialist program of economic reform. He went out of his way to make this clear, pointing out that the Socialist "programs often strikingly approach the just demands of Christian social reformers." If this is true then it follows that those who stand upon a program of Christian social reform will find themselves standing "strikingly" near to those who stand upon a program of Socialist social reform.

One would never guess that this were true from the tendency of certain Catholics, who have read the social encyclicals either superficially or not at all, to conclude that their Catholicism obliges them to stand as far removed as possible from anything that resembles the Socialist program. One would not be so annoyed by this were it not for their bland assumption that, in defending the stronghold of rugged individualism, of laissez-faire economics, of utilitarian philosophy, they are defending the citadel of the Faith.

The reasoning of these people, many of them too intelligent to be easily excused, is simple and fallacious. It goes like this: Catholics must condemn Socialism. But the nationalization of banks, mines, railroads, utilities, heavy industries is Socialism. Therefore Catholics must condemn the nationalization of banks, mines, railroads, utilities, heavy industries.

They are victims of that most malignant of all intellectual diseases, the substitution of labels for things. It is an ancient disease, known to philosophers as nominalism, but it has become endemic in modern times. Given the nature of the disease it is not surprising that its victims are often condemning in the name of Pius XI measures explicitly defended by Pius XI. Such is the nature of this confusion worse confounded.

It was Pius XI who has pointed out that what the Socialists are often attacking in these and similar measure is "that type of social ownership which, in violation of all justice, has been seized and usurped by the owner of wealth." And it is the same Pius XI who adds: "This rulership in fact belongs, not to the individual owners, but to the state."

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It is probably true to say that the confusion referred to above is more common among Catholics in this country than among Catholics in Europe. How else explain the tendency of many American Catholics to view with alarm the victory of the British Labor Party? They are alarmed because the British Labor Party describes its program as socialistic—and it is socialistic. Yet at the same time, the *Osservatore Romano,* official organ of the Vatican, looks with evident approval upon the results of the British elections and the official organ of the Catholic Action party in Rome hails those results as a splendid repudiation by the British people of individualistic utilitarianism.

The explanation is that Rome is not confused. It understands the difference between socialist programs and Socialist doctrine. The Labor Party is not interested in Socialist doctrine about man and society. It is interested simply in building a more human and just social order. There is, of course, the brilliant Mr. Laski who has been behaving in recent months as though he imagined himself the headmaster of all the Socialist schools in Europe and across the sea. This is an old habit of Socialist ideologues and in this respect Mr. Laski is a throw-back to the doctrinaire Socialists of the nineteenth century. He is also a throw-back in the sense that his recent summons to the head of the Italian Government to drive religion out of the schools, together with his intemperate and highly emotional attack upon the Holy See, strongly suggested that he has not emancipated himself from the secularizing and anti-religious prepossessions of the past. This is unfortunate, because to many people Mr. Laski has seemed a more hopeful figure than some of the stodgy bureaucrats and timid Ramsay MacDonalds of which the Labor Party has its share. It is to be hoped that he will abandon his dangerous attempts to revive the old doctrinaire tendencies. Recent history has shown too clearly what incalculable consequences of evil are latent in every appeal to group prejudice. We have had enough

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of scapegoatism. But in any case Mr. Laski is not the British Labor Party. Since the party is not committed to doctrinaire Socialist philosophy, the relationship between it and Catholicism can be determined upon the basis of its program. Since that program "strikingly" approaches "the just demands of Christian social reformers" there is no reason for hostility.

**Pius XI would say that the British Labor Party** is not truly Socialist. In his view the ideologues of modern Socialism had made their doctrine so integral a part of the movement that he who, although retaining the economic program, rejected the doctrine would not be called "a true Socialist." This contention is entirely correct and would be wholeheartedly endorsed by the Fathers of Socialism themselves. The latter always insisted upon this and far more emphatically than the Pope. Since they themselves, because of their unfortunate fascination with dialectical materialism, established the dogma that the Socialist program had no intelligible meaning except as a derivative of the doctrine, Pius XI is only drawing the logical conclusion.

While this affirmation by the Pope is perfectly sound, it alone does not provide an adequate guide to the formation of sound practical judgment. And this for a reason outside the control of either the Pope or the Fathers of Socialism. The reason is that there is nothing to prevent the Labor Party or other parties from calling themselves Socialist even though they are not interested in Socialist doctrine. It is idle to propose that we must persuade such parties that because they do not accept Socialist doctrine they are not truly Socialist (but merely socialist) and therefore must drop the title. Consequently the determinant of a Catholic's attitude is not whether or not a party call itself Socialist, but whether that party is committed to or inspired by Socialist doctrine.

The Holy See understands this very well. That is why it raises no objection to Catholics belonging to the British Labor Party. And that is why the Canadian hierarchy, which also evidently understands, sees no reason why Catholics cannot support the Canadian Commonwealth Federation although the CCF is generally regarded, and so regards itself, as Socialistic.

It cannot be said that all Catholics have understood this essential point equally well. Recently in a conversation with a fellow Catholic, I said some kind things about the character of Norman Thomas. "But he is a Socialist!" my friend protested, in much the same tone one would say: "But he is a moral leper!" Clearly he had never thought of Norman Thomas's socialism in terms of things, but only in terms of a label. Otherwise, he would possibly have found that the things for which Norman Thomas stands are, in large part, things for which Saint Thomas Aquinas would probably stand were he alive in the modern world. (I have reference only to Norman Thomas's program of social and economic reform, not to his political views.)

This is not to say that a Catholic would be obliged by the principles of Catholic social thought to enroll in Norman Thomas's party. There are more forms than one in which those principles can take shape in a dynamic and complex society. But it is to say that the Catholic who was not content with nominalism would be apt to discover that the "demands and desires" of Norman Thomas "contain nothing opposed to Christian truth." It is also to say that the Catholic who sought his inspiration in the old tradition of Christian social thought would find himself standing immeasurably closer to the things Norman Thomas believes in than to the things the National Association of Manufacturers believes in and which it is pleased to call the "American way of life."

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Some will object that, altogether apart from the question of Socialist philosophy, there is an irreconcilable conflict between Catholicism and Socialism on the programatic level because of the latter's denial of the right to private property. A number of things need to be said about this:

1) The denial of the right to private property never properly belonged to the Socialist program but to Socialist doctrine. Having rejected Christianity and the Christian view of human history and human nature, the Fathers of Socialism had to find a substitute for Original Sin. They found it in private property.

2) There is no Socialist party today whose program calls for the abolition of all forms of private property. While the Socialist program, because like all programs of social reform it is necessarily empirical, differs in detail from country to country, it may be said that in general it calls for community ownership of those industries and services which, either because of their gigantism or their intimate relationship to the common good, involve a degree of social ownership which cannot safely be left in private hands. If one could free oneself long enough from the intellectual toils of nominalism, it would not be altogether impossible to prove that what most Socialist programs aim at is the restoration to the disinherited masses of the enjoyment of their right to private property, a right of which they have been deprived by capitalism. One of the ironic paradoxes of recent times has been the spectacle of men defending in the name of private property a system which has been steadily driving more and more men into the ranks of the propertyless.

3) The Catholic position on the subject of private property needs clarification. Despite the

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warnings of Leo XIII, Pius XI, and Pius XII, Catholics have a tendency to think of private property as an absolute right, as an end in itself, and as a primary principle of the natural law. They are confusing the right to private property with the right common to all men to a sufficiency of material goods to live a decent life. This latter is the absolute right, derogation of which is a violation of a primary principle of the natural law. The right to private property is itself but a derivative of this primary principle and is valid only in terms of its realtionship to the end it is supposed to serve. Property is functional in character and the right to private property is also functional in character.

A system of property tenure which in effect operates to deprive large numbers of men of the necessities of a good life cannot be defended by invoking the natural right to private property. To do so is to frustrate the ends which the natural law seeks to achieve. It is to make a mockery of the law. It is this kind of foreshortened thinking which has so often impeded the peaceful reform of society and made violent revolution inevitable. Throughout much of the nineteenth century, efforts to free the vast masses of Russian peasantry from their wretched prison of economic and social misery were defeated or fatally deferred by appeals to the sacred rights of private property. To expropriate and redistribute the great estates of the landed gentry was alleged to violate the natural law. The Fathers of the Church would have had fewer scruples about resorting to a radical, and Christian, solution:

Saint Jerome, who with the immense *latifundia* of Italy in mind, did not hesitate to write that "all riches, being a spoliation of others, are born of injustice," and several times to repeat his strong condemnation: *"omnis dives aut iniquis aut iniqui haeres."*

Saint Ambrose who lectured the rich man on the social function of property: "Instead of giving to the poor man out of what is yours, you are but restoring something of that which belongs to him. For you have appropriated to yourself alone things that were given as a common possession for the use of all. The earth belongs to all, not merely to the rich; yet those that enjoy their heritage are fewer than those that do not enjoy it."

Saint Augustine who in two sentences illuminates the heart of the Catholic position on property, so often poorly understood by Catholics: "The superfluities of the rich are the necessaries of the poor. They who possess superfluities, *possess the goods of others.*" (Italics added.)

4) Because of the functional nature of property on the one hand and, on the other hand, the dynamic character of society, there is no single form of property tenure which alone meets the requirements of the natural law. On the contrary, the forms are manifold and, as already indicated, a particular form, which in one age and under certain conditions functions satisfactorily, in a radically different social and economic environment defeats the very purpose of property. Those who think that there is something divinely ordained and immutable in the property arrangements that have characterized the age of individualistic utilitarianism need to be reminded by Saint Thomas Aquinas that "human convention rather than the natural law brings about a division of property." Consequently both the division and the form of property can be changed by human convention without necessarily derogating from the natural law. They have in fact often been changed. It is not surprising to learn from the eminent historian, Cardinal Gasquet, that the basis of property in Catholic pre-Reformation England was not individualism but "Christian collectivism."

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From this discussion I conclude that there is no insurmountable obstacle in the way of establishing peaceful relations between Catholicism and Socialism. It is of paramount importance to the interests of each and to the interests of the people of Europe that they do establish peaceful relations with each other. Only if these two forces are able to collaborate in a spirit of mutual understanding is there any hope of Europe finding a middle path between equally intolerable extremes of violence and tyranny.

If this desirable end is to be achieved the old line Socialist parties of Europe must rid themselves of the last vestiges of nineteenth century doctrinaire mumbo-jumbo. To a considerable extent there has already taken place a gradual evolution in this direction. Pope Pius XI frankly admitted as much in *Quadragesimo Anno.*

It would be unrealistic to pretend, however, that this evolution has proceeded evenly in every country and has reached the point where all Socialist parties have so far purged themselves of doctrinaire influences as to remove any basis for Catholic misgivings. In this respect Socialism among Anglo-Saxon peoples seems to have advanced more rapidly than Socialism on the Continent. There is somewhat the same difference between Anglo-Saxon and Continental Socialism as between Anglo-Saxon and Continental masonry. It is because of this, as the *Osservatore Romano* recently pointed out to the Italian Socialists, that there is nothing inconsistent in the fact that the Vatican looks upon the victory of the British Labor Party with complacency while maintaining an attitude of reserve toward Italian Socialism.

Léon Blum has boasted that "Socialism is master of the present hour." If by Socialism he meant the Socialist Party then his exuberant op-

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timism must have been somewhat tempered by the results of the recent elections in France. If by Socialism he meant the general socialist program of economic reform, then he is right. In that sense Socialism has now its historic chance. What it does with that chance, whether it makes good its claim that it can create a more just economic order without destroying essential human freedoms, depends largely upon its ability to win the cooperation of European Catholicism.

The hour in which the call has come to Socialism is a difficult one. The conditions under which the socialist program will be put into effect are the reverse of ideal. Socialism is assuming responsibility in the midst of a desolate continent, in the midst of ruins, in the midst of the gaunt silence of a shattered economy. If it is to succeed against these odds it will need all the support it can get. This means that it must win the collaboration of Catholics. It does not follow that Catholics must enlist in the Socialist parties. There are other parties, young and vigorous and promising, which are committed in varying degrees to the socialist program but which do not suffer from the liabilities bequeathed by lingering memories of old doctrinaire attitudes. These memories and their still far from entirely mortified influences will make it difficult for a long time to come for sincere Catholics to join the old line Socialist parties. This is not necessary. What is necessary is that the new progressive parties must find it possible to cooperate loyally with the Socialist parties. This cooperation will be foredoomed if Socialist leaders prove more interested in the old discredited doctrines than in building a good human society.

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The issue that faces Europe is not between capitalism and socialism. That issue has been decided. The issue is between freedom and slavery, between democracy and tyranny. It will be resolved in favor of slavery and tyranny unless Socialism and Catholicism are able to work together. Catholics must understand that they can go a very long way in supporting the economic program of the Socialists because to the extent that it is socialist and not simply Socialist it is not opposed to some of the best Christian traditions and teachings. Socialists must understand that Catholics will not be able to cooperate with any party that proposes to destroy their liberties. Except for rare individuals, people are not interested in freedom in the abstract but only in the concrete as it affects them. If in recent times Catholics have sometimes seemed to stand aloof from or in opposition to "democratic" movements, it has been largely because the leadership of these movements, like the leadership of Socialism, has so often been tainted with rationalism and has succumbed to an anti-religious orientation. The triumph of these movements in certain countries has often meant an immediate attack upon the liberties of Catholics. Its effect has sometimes been to drive Catholics into the ranks of the opposition where on occasion they gave support to other tyrannies, which did not tyrannize over them. A régime or a party which is sincere in its devotion to liberty and democracy will endeavor to respect and defend the cultural and religious autonomy of all the citizens and of their institutions. Europe can learn much in this respect from the example of the United States where both Church and State and people have prospered because freedom has really meant freedom for all.

If the Socialists are bent upon provoking a tragic conflict there is one sure formula for them to follow: Any attempt to secularize society along doctrinaire lines, to interfere with the freedom of the Church in her proper sphere, to destroy Catholic schools, to hamstring Catholic institutions will make conflict inevitable.

Such a conflict will be disastrous for Europe. It will be a tragedy for the Church. It will be fatal to Socialism or—and it is the same thing—to its claim that it can achieve its economic objectives without destroying essential human freedoms. Fascism would never have succeeded in Spain had it not been for the excesses of doctrinaire left-wing *exaltés* who interpreted the victory of republicanism in 1932 as a mandate to drive religious orders from the country, to destroy Catholic education, and to offend Catholic feelings at every turn. The best friends of the Spanish Republic recognize this fact. A recent statement issued by Indalecio Prieto, together with other Spanish republicans and Socialists in exile, suggests that these Socialists realize the tragic mistake of the past. Here is a hopeful sign.

There are other hopeful signs. On the part of Catholics in Europe, if not yet in America, there is an increasing recognition of the distinction between Socialist doctrine and socialist program, and a realization of the fact that between Catholicism and socialist program there is no irreconcilable conflict but a large amount of common interest. Consequently, the parties that are winning the largest measure of Catholic voting support are new parties which are committed to programs that can be generally classified as socialist.

On the part of Socialists there have been evidences of a desire to avoid conflict with Catholicism, of a growing awareness that the hostility of the past could have been avoided.

It is too early to say whether the cause of mutual understanding, tolerance, good will and collaboration will triumph. It is not too early to say that it must triumph, that rapprochement must be achieved. Nothing less is at stake than the future of democracy, the future of freedom, the future of Europe.

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# The Stage & Screen

## *The Secret Room*

AS ITS title suggests, Robert Turney's present offering is a melodrama entirely dependent upon architectural device, and while it seems to me that the author's material and theme were certainly deserving of more serious treatment, I can see no way of proving this without outlining the doings from A to B[1] (an excess of inertia seeming to have been the audiences' chief reaction to the work). A plot synopsis runs somewhat on this order: an aristocratic Italian woman, a pianist, having suffered a number of final tortures (including enforced prostitution) at the hands of the nazis, is rescued through the efforts of an older American medical man and brought to this country. This Doctor, effecting a partial medical and spiritual cure of his patient, hopes to be able to place her as companion in the household of a younger colleague, a psychiatrist, whose young pregnant wife and two small daughters will be in need of additional domestic help during his sojourn in the army. We learn at the curtain's rise that the two little girls of this family have only just discovered an historical secret room in the country house recently inherited by their mother. The meeting between the two Doctors, the transference of the patient and of her complete case-history (contained in a notebook) astonishingly never takes place, as in a first-act scene she effects the death of the older man in an excess of terror, and thereafter, in a clearly deranged manner, commands the arena and the imagination of its people, particularly of the children, until a kind of sprawling, screaming, lunatic ending is brought about. One curtain descending upon a murderer-in-the-make (is it? isn't it?) plus an incessant use of the presence and lispings of two unreasonably-aged children will constitute, I think, Mr. Turney's contribution to the possibilities of his craft. It is not a large one.

Even in such a whirling roundabout as Broadway it is not possible, I judge, to disregard a writer's motives provided they are in any way traceable and responsible. But melodrama, what Chesterton has called "the precious jewel of the poor," has always depended as a form upon the particular rather than the universal, upon extremities of character and situation in order to command the "willing suspension of disbelief." The minute *reality* rather than *invention* is stressed in these assorted violences, one gets a divided audience reaction, in other words, confusion. Accounting historically (factually) for the horrors of our day, and for the fact that the effect of the late war upon the European artist and intellectual left not one of these people unbroken through psychical as well as actual physical torture, it is certainly of universal human interest to speculate how these men and women are to be healed, else heal themselves. In his introduction of his pathetic heroine, his Italian pianist, I think Mr. Turney grasped a big and real problem, but surely the working out of such a problem should have little to do with secret rooms, false motivations, arranged subsidiary characters, and such further contrivances as are on view at the Royale these evenings. The affair is successless from the beginning, and is only stimulating, I should say, in its unintelligence. The play must simply be written all over again.

I thought Eleonora Mendelssohn in the big bad part vastly interesting to watch. An actress of detailed sensibility, she got away with even the silliest hyperbolic flights, and her appearance is lovely, her voice telling. The rest were nicely competent, including Frances Dee and Grace Coppin; although I thought the character of a Negro maid, taken by Juanita Hall, was not only especially poorly written but overweightedly directed by Moss Hart. Frederick Fox's set provided an appropriate amount of exits, cryptic and otherwise. (***At the Royale.***)

## *The Girl From Nantucket*

IN SPITE of the series of adjusted nightmares the term "Musical Comedy" is apt to rear in the mind of a reviewer, I honestly don't think anyone could have dreamed this. Based on some kind of mixup between a Manhattan mural painter, a house painter, and a number of Nantucket boys and girls and characters, I find the program so black with names there is small chance for tracing the arsenic to its source. I will say, however, that the Lou Eisele costumes were not only the most tasteless and ugliest I have ever seen, but more than this, succeeded in hampering the players' personality as well as action. The ultimate nadir will be a "Moby Dick" ballad-ballet, written by Mary Caroll, and closing the first act. Introduced by a male chorus number called "Men to the Sea," danced by a thin group of badly lit toe-people, and moaned, groaned, droned in Whitmanesque periods by an actor I am unable to identify, I am afraid only one word will suffice to describe it: goodbye. (*At the Adelphi.*)

## *The Rich Full Life*

IN CASE anyone is interested in how the commercial short story unfits the stage, I think a good example of the process is on view at the John Golden right now. Vina Delmar's latest concerns a suburban mother, married to a plodding father and determined that her delicate, consistently ailing teen-age daughter shall have one glorious adolescent memory to sustain her through future suburban life. In spite of loud and threatening stage weather, the child attends a school-dance successfully and proceeds to totter on the brink of death and maternal remorse and determination for an entire final act. I must say the significance of this escapes me. One phenomenon, however, arises from the playing. Judith Evelyn, performing in a hunched, carefully careless, wholly provocative manner, throws the business quite out of line. Presenting a complete character out of nothing, her playing renders the rest of the stock stuff unbelievable. It is not possible for such a woman to possess the kind of one-dimensional daughter and husband as are written for her. The thing comes off as another of the great American Fairy Tales, wherein Youth-Youth is neither understanding, understood, interesting, interested, aware nor sufficiently dumb; but merely *promoted*. Virginia Weidler, Frederic Tozere, and particularly Edith Meiser should be mentioned for

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filling their rôles. Raymond Sovey's one set is, in its subtle accentuation of the author's purpose, exactly in line with his earlier work of the season: "Therese" and "The Ryan Girl." His precise pictorial support of a number of shaky playwrights seems to me the grace-note of the year so far. (*At the John Golden.*) KAPPO PHELAN.

## With Chocolates, Cheese & Watches

ANOTHER assuring sign of the war's end is the reappearance on the market of imported goods. And not the least of these is foreign films. During the war, the English and Russians sent us most of their best productions, many of which compare favorably with Hollywood's prize packages. Now it is our good fortune to welcome a couple of Swiss movies. Although these tend to toot the Swiss horn (what films don't put their country's best foot forward?), when they are good they are very, very good.

*"The Last Chance"* has as much universality and bigness of spirit as could be found in any one film. It tells a simple story about an English lieutenant and an American sergeant who escape, during the autumn of 1943, from a German prison train in Italy. They make their way to a village near the Italo-Swiss border where a priest is harboring refugees who are waiting to be smuggled into Switzerland. By this time Italy is at peace with the Allies, but is over-run with Germans. When the guide, lined up by the priest to conduct the harassed and weary refugees over the mountains and past the guards, is killed by the Germans in a ruthless bombardment of defenseless villages, the two escapees and an English major, also hidden in the priest's house, agree to lead the international group to safety. Although the plot is exceedingly well told through Leopold Lindtberg's direction, particularly in the exciting chase scenes and the perilous climb over snowy mountains, it is the film's theme you will long remember: the humanity of the good priest, the kindness of the polyglot refugees toward each other, the consideration of the three men who are acting as guides though they realize that their ill-assorted charges are delaying them, the generosity of the Swiss in accepting more aliens.

However, the interesting plot and excellent development of the feeling of man toward his fellow men are not the film's only assets. The acting throughout, by a cast of unfamiliar names, is of a high calibre. It is impossible to mention all the fine performances, since there are so many, especially in the smallest rôles of the suffering though courageous refugees. Attention should be called to Romano Calo for his moving portrayal of the Italian priest and to John Hoy and Ray Reagan as the young men who play the lead rôles. The latter, actually an American soldier who was interned in Switzerland, is making his first film appearance. I wish the script (by Richard Schweizer) didn't require him to use so much slang and be so boyishly naive at times. And the death scene of Hoy as the English lieutenant is a little too noble to be believable. But the film is by no means all sweetness and light. The Italian who informs on the priest, the discussions among the three Allied soldiers as to whether they should risk their own necks in helping the refugees over the mountains, the reluctance of the Swiss to admit the group after the desperate journey provide sequences of added realism and tight suspense. The beautifully photographed Swiss scenery and villages used as settings contribute greatly to this extraordinary movie. English sub-titles translate the essence of speeches made in foreign languages, so you should have no difficulty in following the well-told story. Furthermore, good movies like all good art speak an international language. Some of the emotional scenes are deeply stirring, and perhaps none more so than the sequence in the mountain hut when the tired group sing "Frère Jacques"; each sings in his own tongue, but it is the same song and helps greatly to build up group morale.

*"Marie Louise"* tells a phase of a similar story, and while it is not as exciting as "The Last Chance" or as broad in scope, it is a stunning cinema vignette. It was made by practically the same group responsible for the other film: the same producer (L. Wechsler), the same director, scriptwriter, editor (Herman Haller), director of photography (Emil Berna) and Robert Blum in charge of music. After a realistic introduction that shows Rouen as a field of battle in 1940, the locale moves to Switzerland where 12-year-old Marie Louise is sent two years later with a group of French children for a vacation from war. The implications of this plot, which is simplicity itself, are almost more than one can stand. And the scene in which the French youngsters are distributed to their temporary Swiss foster parents would soften the stoniest heart. Marie Louise is taken by the Ruegg family. After complications involving Papa Ruegg, established as a domineering business man, the child is accepted and loved by the entire household—even papa who turns out to be a pretty nice guy beneath his rough exterior. At first, Marie Louise herself proves difficult; but the Rueggs understand why she is almost a psychiatric case. Then after the child is straightened out through loving care, wise doctoring *and* an absence of war, the problem arises concerning her return to Rouen and to her mother whose younger child was killed in an air raid. Spoiled by Papa Ruegg after months of pampering, Marie Louise is reluctant to go back to her own mother; on the train, she runs away from the other children and walks all the way back to her Swiss friends. This time the Ruegg family are wiser. Marie Louise is given a healthy vacation in a mountain chalet where French children are staying, thanks to the kindness of Swiss factory employees who work overtime to support the worthy cause. Although this film moves slowly, its appealing theme and excellent characterizations will win your interest. English sub-titles translate many of the speeches, all of which are in French and Swiss. The performances are good and Josiane's as the youthful heroine is a masterpiece of subtlety and understanding. The child's face, frequently reminiscent of a young Garbo, is haunting in its expressions of fear and conflict. Like so many foreign films, this one has many scenes of homely and intimate detail that Hollywood seldom approaches. And its photography is lovely. But, as with "The Last Chance," you will remember "Marie Louise" mainly for its warmth and bigness of heart.

PHILIP T. HARTUNG.

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# Within and Without: George Macdonald

ANNE FREMANTLE

IN FORTY years, through the middle of the nineteenth century, George Macdonald published sixty-three books. He also had eleven children, a wonderfully happy life, and an immense number of friends including the Brownings, the Carlyles, Octavia Hill, Matthew Arnold, Lady Byron and the eighth Duke of Argyle—to mention but a few samples of the varying types who all admired and, indeed, reverenced this tall, handsome Highlander, with his jet-black hair, fine profile and noble head. His father had been a small farmer, a "crofter" as they are called in Scotland, and George remained poor, very simple and unassuming all his life. He is in the tradition of the healthy, hardworking genius—of Bach and Goethe and Tolstoi—indeed, he has often been called the English Tolstoi, but, paradoxically, it is the underlying antitheses, rather than the obvious resemblances, between the two which are remarkable.

The rub, the pearl-creating irritation, may for artist or writer be external—poverty, ill-health, lack of friends or fame—or it may be internal, the worm i' the bud, as is, on the whole, more usual, for, compared with carpenters and candlestick makers, poets and painters lead sheltered lives. But by some—and the three cited above are the most shining of all examples—creation produces its own appetite, and they make as simply and as inevitably as they breathe. Of such was George Macdonald; one of the most completely integrated of characters, and, as such, personally a great influence on his generation and on his juniors. Like Tolstoi, he was an aristocrat, though, unlike him, a peasant. One of his forebears escaped from the Massacre of Glencoe—when all the clan Macdonald except 120 souls were killed in February, 1692—and fled to the east of Scotland. There George's great-grandfather was born on April 16, 1746—the day of the Battle of Culloden Moor, in which the Jacobite cause was finally lost, and in which George's great-great-grandfather lost his sight—he was a piper, and his son after him. George's Gaelic-speaking grandfather moved to Huntly in Aberdeenshire, and his father, who spoke English as well as Gaelic, married Helen Mackay, sister to a famous Gaelic scholar. She died soon after George's birth, in 1824, and his father married again. His stepmother (she lived to be over 100) was so kind that George used to say that when he got to Heaven he'd be puzzled as to which he'd greet first—his real mother, or his father's second wife. Yet, in "Phantastes," he "remembers somehow that my mother died when I was a baby." George Macdonald took his M.A. at Kings College, Aberdeen, then went to London to study for the Congregational Ministry. He was ordained to Trinity Chapel at Arundel, but his spiritual and intellectual independence distressed his congregation, and he resigned in 1853, and never received another appointment, though as a layman he preached all his life. Under the influence of Frederick Maurice, he became a member of the Church of England. He moved to Manchester, to be near Alexander Scott, then principal of Owens College, and there made friends with Henry Septimus Sutton and with Coventry Patmore.

In 1855 he published his first book, a story in verse, "Within and Without." In 1856 a severe illness obliged him to winter in Algiers, and to live thereafter in the milder south of England. He moved to London in 1860, but nearly always wintered abroad, after 1881 at the Casa Coraggio at Bordighera, a house he built with money raised and given him by his many friends. In 1851 he married Louisa, daughter of James Powell, who had quite a talent for the stage, and the Macdonalds put on annually for many years a dramatized version of "The Pilgrims Progress." George Macdonald eked out the slender income obtained from his books by lecturing. In 1872 he came on a lecture tour to America, and had a great success here, meeting and making friends with Longfellow, Oliver Wendell Holmes, and Emerson. In 1871 Queen Victoria granted him a Civil List pension of £100 a year. In 1902 his wife died, in Italy, and he returned to England, living at Haslemere in a house built for him by his youngest daughter, Lady Troup. There he died in 1905.

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His "second sight," inherited from his Celtic ancestors, may have been a reason why he wrote, all through his life, two totally different types of stories. There are his many novels of humble Scots life—classics of their kind, for no one has written better Doric, nor better local tales than "Malcolm," in which he writes of his piper ancestors, than "Alec Forbes" and "Adela Cathcart." "Robert Falconer"—which contains a wonderful portrait of George Macdonald's grandfather, who taught himself to read when he was over sixty—"Heather and Snow" and "David Elginbrod" are others of this kind. But they are as different from his "works of fancy and imagination"—which began with "Phantastes," his second book, published in 1857, and ended with "Lilith," in 1895—as Lewis Carroll's mathematical treatises are from "Alice in Wonderland" or the G. D. H. Coles detective stories from their learned economic text-books. As Tolstoi was a novelist first—both in time and in emphasis—and a mystic after, so George Macdonald was a mystic, a writer of allegories and faerie romance and poetry first, and a novelist and teacher after. He wrote also moral tales: "Annals of a Quiet Neighborhood," "The Vicar's Daughter," "The Seaboard Parish"; these are unreadable now (except for those who enjoy a pre-Trollopian quiet in which curates come to tea) and must have been pretty doughy going at any time.

But in his "within" stories and, above all, in his children's tales, he put across to the Victorian young and to their elders the most profound theories of Blake and Novalis, of Thoreau and Fechner, and this without any talking down or watering down, without the nauseating vulgarity of the "little girlie" approach that disfigures so many otherwise laudable attempts, without any trace of

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girl-guidishness or pomposity. He certainly hid to the world what he bared to children.

> For of the Soul the body form doth take
> For Soul is form and doth the body make

Spenser had written, and this is one of the underlying themes of George Macdonald's "faerie romances." Always the two worlds;

> so strangely are they one
> And yet so measurelessly far apart.

How tangible the other world must have been to him is evident from the terror as well as the delight with which he depicts it, for he was no schizophrenic, escaping from one when the other grew too uncomfortable. Both worlds, he knew, are entirely within the individual: all the horror, and the whole glory. From within come the Shadows, good in the story called after them, evil in "Phantastes" and in "Lilith," good in the most perfect of all the faery-tales, "The Golden Key." From within, too, come the cats, who are numerous in "Lilith," and sometimes grow to panthers: they are always repentences. Mr. Vane, the hero, asks Mara:

> "Have you many messengers like her?"
> "As many as I require."
> "Are they hard to teach?"
> "They need no teaching. They are all of a certain breed, but not one of the breed is like another. Their origin is so natural it may seem to you incredible."
> "May I not know it?"
> "A new one came to me last night—from your head while you slept."
> "Then the creature is mine!" I cried.
> "Not at all," she answered; "that only can be ours in whose existence our will is a factor."

This recalls Blake's "the bat that flits at close of eve, has left the brain that won't believe."

"Within and Without" was uneven—not a very successful love-story, though it contained lovely lines:

> The lightning and the thunder
> They go and they come
> But the stars and the stillness
> Are always at home.

It is with "Phantastes," the story of a young man, Anodos, who wakes on his twenty-first birthday to find a stream flowing beside his bed, a forest over his head, flowers growing from his wash-hand-stand, that the stories of a multi-dimensional world begin. Anodos has faery blood, and can understand the motives behind the wicked ash-tree, that would use his heart to grow a man's roots in, or the perfidious alder-tree, who is evil desire. Anodos loses his lovely quest, through his own impatience and folly, and acquires a Shadow, that has its own thickness. When this falls on a child dancing along tossing a shining, singing ball, the child turns into an ugly coarse girl and the ball breaks; the flowers upon which Anodos treads rise again; those upon which his Shadow falls shrivel into cinders. Anodos becomes squire to a good knight, and at the end redeems himself by tearing an idol off its throne and throttling the wolf that leaps out from under it at the cost of his own life. There is a description of the dead hero, feeling the lady he loves and the knight weeping over him, that begins: "I was dead, and right content." In many of the stories there are haunting passages "in praise of dusty death" as though it were easier when pushing up the daisies to attain that state of which George Macdonald says: "in still rest, in changeless simplicity, I bear uninterrupted the consciousness of the whole of humanity within me."

"Phantastes" is spattered with verse. One refrain, sung by Anodos's lady

> Alas, how easily things go wrong
> A sigh too much, and a kiss too long
> And there follows a mist and a weeping rain
> And life is never the same again
>
> Alas, how hardly things go right
> 'Tis hard to watch in a summer night
> For the sigh will come and the kiss will stay
> And the summer night is the winter day

became a much-loved Victorian song. "Phantastes" was the first of George Macdonald's books to be illustrated by Arthur Hughues, and never was relationship between writer and illustrator, between story and pictures, more constantly happy and successful. "The Princess and the Goblin," "The Princess and Curdie" and "At the Back of the North Wind" are unthinkable without their illustrations, and the partnership is as close as was that of Tenniel and the author of "Alice."

Different as they are from each other, and from "Phantastes," these stories have elements in common: always there is a lady with long hair, who is both infinitely old and very young; sometimes too, she is especially tiny or enormous (tiny in "Phantastes," outsize when she is the North Wind). She is the Princess of the two princess books, and always she explains how time there is not time here, nor sound there, sound here. Water, too, plays a tremendous rôle though in every story, in the later books all four elements are almost equally sacramental.

In the "Diary of an Old Soul" (1880), his last book in verse, there are some lines presaging Francis Thompson:

> Thy fishes breathe but where Thy waters roll
> Thy birds fly but within Thy airy sea
> Thy souls breathe only in Thy infinite soul
> I breathe, I think, I love, I live but Thee.

In "Letters from Hell" (1884) occur some of Macdonald's most horrifying passages. The dinner-parties in hell, where everyone knows all that can be known, about himself and about his neighbors, so that there can be no discovery, and therefore no object in conversation, but where, like a hurdy-gurdy, or a stuck phonograph-record, the inanities of social intercourse are bleated endlessly, have an unpleasantly premonitory feel.

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But it is in his "Dealing with the Faeries" that he is most delicate and yet most profound. "The Light Princess" tells of a king and queen from whose only daughter at her christening her uninvited aunt withdrew all gravity.

> Light of spirit, by my charms
> Light of body, every part
> Never weary human arms
> Only crush thy parent's heart.

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After delightful descriptions of the palace servants playing ball with the baby princess, and of the king getting a step-ladder to fetch her down from the study ceiling (for the weight of air prevented her rising very high) she grows up to laugh too much. And "in her laugh there was something missing . . . a certain tone, depending on the possibility of sorrow, for the hatching of a real laugh requires the incubation of gravity. She never smiled." Only when swimming in the lake does she become a little more sedate, better behaved. Because water seems a cure, her parents try to make her cry, but neither to shame, nor to compassion, nor even by pain could she be moved. A prince finds her, but though she will swim with him, she will not love. The wicked aunt dries up the lake, and the princess is in despair. A message is found: the lake will refill if a man offer himself to stop up the hole through which the waters fled—a hole sucked by the wicked aunt's serpent—after the waters have closed over the man's head. Of course the prince offers himself (he had been filling in time as the princess's shoe-black; being a delightfully lazy character, for the shoes of a princess lacking gravity needed little cleaning!). His only condition is that the princess will watch with him till he dies. She does, uncaring; only after he is drowned does she suddenly drag him out, no longer minding if she lose her lake. And then, a happy ending. In feeling this may well have inspired Oscar Wilde's "The Happy Prince."

"The Giant's Heart" is straight faery-tale: two children, lost in faeryland, are almost eaten by a giant, but learning where he keeps his heart, in the eagle's nest on Mount Skycrack, they set out to capture it. They fall asleep in a tree.

> they were awakened, very early, by a dispute between Mr. and Mrs. Lark.
>
> "Let me up," said the lark.
>
> "It's not time," said the lark's wife.
>
> "It is," said the lark, rather rudely, "the darkness is quite thin. I can see my own beak."
>
> "Nonsense," said the lark's wife. "You know you came home yesterday quite worn out—you had to fly so very high before you saw him. I am sure he would not mind if you took it a little easier."
>
> "That's not it at all," said the lark, "he doesn't want me. I want him. Let me up, I say."

"The Shadows" is almost pure metaphysics. A mortal man is elected king of faerieland, and:

> all the shadows came crowding round him, respectfully, but fearlessly. All the gnomes, goblins and kobolds the king had seen were rectilinear figures compared with the insane lawlessness of form in which the Shadows rejoiced . . . they retained, however, all the time an identity, each of his own type, inexplicably perceptible through every change. Indeed, this preservation of the primary idea of form was more wonderful than the bewildering and ridiculous alterations to which the form was itself every moment subjected.
>
> "What are you?" asked the king.
>
> "We are the Shadows, your majesty. We do not often appear to men. It is only in the twilight of the fire, or when one man or woman is alone with a single candle, or when any number of people are all feeling the same thing at once, making them one, that we show ourselves, and the truth of things."
>
> "Can that be true that loves the night?" asked the king.
>
> "The darkness is the nurse of light," answered the Shadow.

They petition the king against the introduction to his world of artificial light, and describe their duties; one persuades a murderer to confess: How? asks the king.

> "Only by wallowing on the wall a little."
>
> "How could that make him tell?"
>
> "*He* knows."

Another causes a fashionable mother to repent by making a little coffin on the wall, and so forth. At the end they break into a song which in its day became very famous, and was in all the anthologies:

> Shadows, shadows, shadows all
> Shadow birth and funeral
> Shadow moons gleam overhead
> Over shadow graves we tread.

*"The Golden Key"* is the adventure of Mossy, a boy who found the key to the rainbow. A girl, Tangle, meets him at the house of a woman thousands of years old. She feeds her with messenger fish, whose greatest wish is to be eaten, because then they regain their true faery form. Mossy and Tangle seek the Old Man of the Sea across an immense plain, whose "surface was made up of the shadows of leaves innumerable, of lovely and imaginative forms, waving to and fro, floating and quivering in the breath of a breeze whose motion was unfelt, whose sound was unheard." Here are all the shadows of all earthly people, and all mortal things. By the time they have crossed the plain, Mossy's hair is streaked with gray, and Tangle had wrinkles on her forehead. They lose each other, but Tangle finds the Old Man of the Sea, whom after bathing in his pool, she sees as a splendid man in middle age. He sends her to the Old Man of the Earth, who is even older, a youth of marvelous beauty; and after a terrible journey through fire, she comes to the oldest man of all—the Old Man of Fire. He is a little naked child, sitting in the moss.

"He was playing with balls of various colors and sizes, which he disposed in strange figures upon the floor beside him. He was busily, tirelessly playing his solitary game. Diligently as a lace-maker shifts her bobbins, he shifted and arranged his balls. Flashes of meaning would now pass from them to Tangle, and now again all would be terribly obscure, or utterly dark. For seven years she stood there." She asks him the way to the country from which the shadows fall. The child puts his little cool hand on her heart, so that the fire will not burn her and she finds Mossy again. Together they climb the rainbow, which his key has opened for them, knowing they were going up to the country whence the shadows fall. "And," concludes George Macdonald, "by this time I think they must have got there."

★

Throughout the materialistic nineteenth century the stream of interior life that waters English literature so fruitfully, from Piers Plowman to Perelandra, was to a great extent driven, not underground, but into writing for children. George Macdonald was only one of those

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who gave to babes and sucklings what the worldly wisdom of grownups such as Darwin and Herbert Spencer, Renan and Reinach, would have laughed to scorn. Lewis Carroll's Alice is a most profound book; Ruskin's "King of the Golden River," Thackeray's children's stories, those of Jean Ingelow and of de La Motte Fouqué, as well as those of the later Maeterlinck, are other examples of Truth told to the children.

George Macdonald's one entirely adult esoteric novel, "Lilith," is about Adam and Eve, and Lilith, Adam's first wife, who after she had borne him a daughter, Lona, was so puffed up by thinking she had created that she bade Adam worship her. He refused, and she fled to the Prince of Shadows, and has henceforth wrought havoc on the human race. Mr. Vane, a very idiotic young man, finds a mutilated volume in his library; the librarian of which sometimes metamorphosed into a raven, is none other than Adam. With him, by juxtaposing mirrors in his attic, Mr. Vane visits the country of the seven dimensions yet never leaves home. For the great long heads of wild hyacinth he finds are also inside the piano, among the strings of it, and give a peculiar sweetness to the playing of Mr. Vane's housekeeper. The rosebush beside which Adam and Mr. Vane stand smells of Grieg's wedding march; a pigeon, flying up from the churchyard, is a prayer, and the Raven, digging up worms with his beak, tosses them into the air and they become butterflies. They come to the churchyard of which Adam is also sexton. This is the burial-ground of the universe; its compass an unenclosed heath, its walls the gray horizon, low and starless. They enter the sexton's cottage, and Eve makes them welcome, inviting Mr. Vane to eat bread and wine, and to sleep. They go into an inner door, into icy cold where there are couches innumerable, vanishing, it seemed, into the infinite. On each is a still form. At first Mr. Vane thinks their sleep was death, but soon sees it is something deeper still—a something he did not know. His parents and grandparents are there, asleep, but he does not yet recognize them, and flies in terror from the place, back into his library. In a manuscript he learns that his father also knew the raven-librarian-sexton: and had accepted to go out of the door with him, "the blunder all my children make," Adam had murmured, "the only door out is the door in." Mr. Vane ventures back into the other world, unescorted, and commits blunder after blunder: he yields to bad cowardly giants, and meets souls in various stages of rehabilitation. Some, a crowd of gorgeously dressed men and gracefully robed women he watches in dance after dance—the minuet, the pavane, the hey, the coranto, as they vaguely embody the story of life, its meetings, its passions, its partings. But their faces are skull-fronts "hard, gleaming bone, bare jaws, truncated noses, lipless teeth. Fearfuller yet, the eye-sockets were not empty; in each was a lidless living eye. On many of the skulls the hair held its place . . . I looked and saw the daintily domed instep, the plump shoulders basing the spring of the round full neck which withered at half-height to the fluted shaft of a gibbose cranium." Others are wholly skeleton; these engage in furious battle "curses and credos, snarls and sneers, laughter and mockery came huddling in chaotic interpenetration. Skeletons and phantoms fought in maddest confusion. Swords swept through the phantoms; they only shivered. Maces crashed on the skeletons, shattering them hideously; not one fell or ceased to fight, so long as a single joint held together." Lilith is there urging them on; and Mr. Vane is tricked into serving her. His romance with Lona and their adventures in the awful city of Bulika ruled by Lilith, are exciting enough even without their interior connotation, yet always Mr. Vane knows that "the ground of that moor outside the house of death was but the out-issue of my own soul, the under soil of the vineyard of my own being, deep in which unknown to myself lay such nameless horrors—and his account of these, in the chapter entitled, "The Bad Burrow" is grim indeed.

At last, when he has brought only ruin wherever he has rushed in, and has been such a fool that even the angels fear him, he consents to sleep.

> "We knew you would come again," said Eve.
> "How could you know?" I asked.
> "Every creature must one night yield himself and lie down."
> "It will be late, I fear, ere all have laid down," I said.
> "There is no early or late here," Adam rejoined, "for him the true time then first begins, who lays himself down. A desert wide and dreary, parts him who lies down to die from him who lies down to live. The former may well make haste, but here is no haste."

And of Mr. Vane's sleep, George Macdonald writes:

> "I grew aware of existence, aware also of the profound, the infinite cold. I was intensely blessed—more blessed I know, than my heart, imagining, can now recall. I could not think of warmth with the least suggestion of pleasure. I knew I had enjoyed it, but could not remember how. The cold had soothed every care, dissolved every pain, comforted every sorrow—comforted? nay, sorrow was swallowed up in the life drawing near to restore. I lay at peace, full of the quietest expectation, breathing the damp odors of earth, aware of the souls of primroses, daisies and snowdrops, patiently waiting for the spring. How convey the delight of that frozen, yet conscious sleep! How cold I was, words cannot tell, yet I grew colder and colder, and continuously less conscious of myself, continuously more conscious of bliss, unimaginable, yet felt. Then the dreams began to arrive, and came crowding. I lay naked on a snowy peak. The white mist below me heaved like a billowy sea. The cold moon was in the air with me, and above the moon and me the colder sky, in which the moon and I dwelt. . . . I was a child in the bosom of a mother white with a radiant whiteness. . . . I was a youth on a white horse, leaping from cloud to cloud of a blue heaven, hasting calmly to some blessed goal. For centuries I dreamed, or was it chileads? Or only one long night. . . . I think I was where I am—in the heart of God. I dreamed away dim cycles in the center of a melting glacier, the spectral moon drawing nearer and nearer, the winter and the welter of a torrent growing in my ears. I lay and heard them . . . they sang of a peaceful waiting. I dreamed cycles I say, but for aught I know they were the solemn march of a second, pregnant with eternity. Then, all of a sudden all the wrongs I had ever done, from far beyond my earthly memory down to the present moment, were with me. Fully in every wrong lived the conscious I, confessing, abjuring, lamenting the dead, making atonement with every person I had injured, hurt or offended.

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In the end, he stands alone once more in his library not knowing whether he dreams or has dreamed, knowing only that "when I wake at last, into that life, which, as a mother her child, carries this life in its bosom, I shall know that I wake, and doubt no more." And in his waiting, he comforts himself with Novalis: "Our life is no dream, but it should, and perhaps will, become one."

George Macdonald drew, on the whole, fairly simplified characters: his fools are arch-fools, his villains miserable sinners, his children childish as well as child-like. He had a remarkable ear for conversation, and his descriptions, whether of this world or the other, are uniformly excellent. In himself, he had a Scottish dignity and wit, though his humor sometimes failed him—as once, getting his umbrella from the stand in my grandfather's hall, on taking leave, he gently said, "I must be about my Father's business." He was not unlike his beloved underground waters, that refreshed the tired wanderer by their sound under his sleeping head, for during forty years of a very materialistic century, his words flowed, under guise of faery tale to water the dusty, faithless roots of a literature learning the hard way, that if the eye have no light, the whole body is dark.

# Books of the Week

*Our Father's House. Short Stories edited by Sister Mariella Gable, O.S.B. Sheed.* $3.00.

I HAVE at last discovered an explanation for myself for the readiness with which I usually veer away from any collection of short stories. Of all forms of literature, I believe the short story embodies most emphatically the personal philosophy of the author, and more especially is this true at the moment when the story of action has yielded to a study of moods in which the point becomes the point of view. To a Christian and an optimist—or are the terms analogous—a point of view, which is completely cynical, brutal, vulgar, pagan or pessimistic, must necessarily be painful and why suffer pain for the ambiguous cause of modern fiction? In this collection, the medicine may sometimes be strong but it leaves no bad taste behind it.

In the introduction, Sister Mariella explains the yardstick of her choice of stories compatible with Catholic philosophy by first stating von Hildebrand's definition of a "personality" as "the person who makes an appropriate response to values." "Fiction," she continues, "is about people-persons. Catholic fiction is about persons dedicated in a special way to the development of full personality. It will record the dramatic conflict, the success and failure of those who are aware of life as an unbroken obligation to make an appropriate response to value."

"And no more
Will I let any trick of light betray
Me to a house that is nothing but a door."

The real house is, of course, God's house. Hence the title.

The authors are not limited by any means to Catholics and include Tolstoi, Bjornson, O. Henry, as well as Chesterton, Selma Lagerlöf, Sean O'Faolain, Brendan Gill, Harry Sylvester and others. The stories range from simple ones about good people like Tolstoi's to Fray Chavez's New Mexican rascals; from Brendan Gill's skipping, cheerful Mother Coakley to J. F. Powers's introspective study of personal sanctification in "Lions, Harts and Leaping Does"; from the compact plot of O. Henry and Chesterton to a straggling incident like Eisele's "Brother Who Came." Racial prejudice is treated powerfully in Powers's "The Trouble" and poignantly in Claire Laidlaw's "The Little Black Boys," an Avery Hopwood first prize winner. Sister Mariella accounts this story as "pure gold coin" but it invites a dangerous contrast to the rarely pure alloy of Blake's poem, around which it is written especially in the superfluous last paragraph which is mellifluously sentimental. Richard Sullivan contributes an unusual comment on birth control in which a husband, who has taken one drink too many, tells off his wife's sophisticated friends at a card party. There are at least half a dozen stories of children with Sean O'Faolain's bad little boys in the lead. Some of the best writing is by Viola Garvin, an English novelist and wife of the editor of *The Observer*. It's an afternoon with an old priest who has come to substitute for the enthusiastic younger chaplain of a French Convent of the Good Shepherd. The older man knows very well the small gain of the harvest there, the few Magdalenes among the "Fallen" but, like one of his former charges, Marie Jeanne who spies at the village Fair and invites him to watch her put her head in a lion's mouth, he has learned the patience of which Tolstoi speaks in "God Sees the Truth and Waits." The job is there—so is the lion.

It is interesting to note that Tolstoi, Bjornson and Lagerlöf all make use of an impersonal narrative form rather like a ballad in prose which has been elaborated by Benet; that Brendan Gill can make convent humor funny enough for the *New Yorker* (I certainly shouted when Mother Coakley knocked out the racquet salesman); and that Richard Coleman is carrying on with the concise rapid action beloved of O'Henry. *The Sign* has credit for three stories: THE COMMONWEAL and *The Catholic World* each have two; one is from *The Saturday Evening Post;* one from *The Atlantic Monthly* and Sylvester's "The Crazy Guy" actually popped out of *Esquire*.

Sister Mariella supplies a short notice of the author before each story and the reason for its choice. She also makes some caustic comments on the average Catholic short story in her preface. But even if Catholic editors discover a likely author, how can they afford to keep him? The collection is varied enough to appeal to many tastes. My own pleasure was undiluted. E. V. R. WYATT.

*Pascal and His Sister Jacqueline. M. V. Woodgate. Herder.* $2.00.

WE CAN now look back to the dispute between the Jesuits and the friends of Port Royal with some of the detachment shown at the time by the Vatican, which was content to pronounce "merely unserviceable" a work denounced by the opposition as "full of extravagance, impertinence, error, and blasphemy." The Jesuits showed that their roomy omnibus jolting cordially up the straight and narrow way could be defended quite cavalierly against the croppyheads that would have forced the passengers to alight, and allowed one or two of them to proceed on foot between the dark morasses of wickedness.

We can feel now that the controversy was as mannered as the example: puritanism in France was tempered by rational style, and neither issued into smugness and righteousness or tapped an archaic and Celtic distrustfulness for nature. Geometry and Jansenism went together; talks of barometric pressure alternated with dis-

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cussions on predestination in the Pascal household. Yet the intellectual frivolity of the discussion in political circles had cruel effects. Lay people do not manage heresy hunting so nearly or so mercifully as the theologians; they are like civilians at war.

This simple and unaffected account of one innocent victim, Blaise Pascal's much loved younger sister, moves one to gratitude and to pity. He was a partisan and could look after himself; but she, though raised in the bleak and volcanic Auvergne, had been a lovely slip of gaiety, who could charm the great Cardinal Richelieu to bend down and kiss her, and whose plays and conceits had enchanted Corneille. She preceded her famous brother into the ways of organized holiness, and finally died of a broken heart, or, more accurately according to the contemporary phrase, "she died of the formula," for under pressure she had subscribed to the condemnation of a book she had never read. T. G. WAYNE.

*The Bostonians. Henry James. Dial.* $3.00. *The Question of Henry James: Various Opinions. Edited by F. W. Dupee. Holt.* $3.75.

THE BOSTONIANS is one of the relatively few of Henry James's longer novels dealing with the American scene, the only two others of merit that come to mind being "The Europeans" and "Washington Square." Written as far back as 1886, it is also among the least known of his books, was excluded against the author's wish from the luxurious New York edition and has never, until now, been reprinted in this country.

It is no secret that Henry James did not love Boston or the Boston hinterland, including Harvard College, and after the appearance of "The Bostonians," Boston had no reason to love him. The novel is a comparatively early work, and hence measures up neither to the writer's probable conception, nor to the noisy veneration of his devotees, but allowing for the gulf between a young writer's concept and its result, it is evident that James wished to paint a pretty comprehensive picture of the intellectual Boston society of his time. He desired to convey, through that art of subtle narrative in which he was already master, the feel, distillation, fine flower, the thing in itself which Boston was, and is. The period of the story is the Seventies, post-Civil War, and decay has already set in. As Van Wyck Brooks has written somewhere: "It is an image of the aftermath of the heroic age, the ebb-tide of all those humanitarian impulses [abolition, Brook Farm and the like] which had lost themselves in fatuity and petrifaction." For Henry James, at least, the futuity vested itself in the folds of the feminist movement. For him, the heroic age had lost itself in a deplorable and even sinister Bohemia of decadents, imposters, male and female, unmitigated cranks.

Ransome, a young, conservative, not unattractive Southerner, visits Boston for the first time, and calls on his cousin, Olive Chancellor, who is no longer in her first youth, lives alone on Charles Street, and is hungry for a Cause which turns out to be that of Woman's Rights. Ransome is received by Mrs. Luna, Olive's sister, a sprightly widow, evidently one of the originators of the sentiment that the best thing in Boston is the five o'clock train to New York. The tone of the highly promising novel is nicely set when the lady informs Ransome that his cousin proposes to take him to "one of her weird meetings."

"What kind of a meeting? You speak as if it were a rendezvous of witches on the Brocken."


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**THE COMMONWEAL**


"Well, so it is; they are all witches and wizards, mediums and spirit-rappers and roaring radicals."

We have often dreamed that a fascinating novel about modern Boston could be written on precisely that atmosphere; but James, despite one or two later experiments in *diablerie,* was not a mystic of any brand, and he at once drops his opportunity, assuming the latter to be part of his scheme. This turns out nothing worse than a business of "roaring radicals," most of them belonging to the fair sex, and the only sinister element in their *sabbats* is the apparition of young Verena Tarrant who, when hypnotized by her horrid, faith-healing father, utters beautiful monologues on the Rights of Woman. Verena does not sound like a very nice person, but as a matter of fact, she is among the most enchanting of James's notable gallery of girls. With Verena, at any rate, the two cousins (not to put a fine point on it) proceed at once to fall in love. For the greater part of the book Olive has it her own way. Verena goes to live with her on the riverine side of Charles Street, and, at about this point, there occurs one of those passages which James, and he alone, could write. . . .

"The western windows of Olive's drawing-room, looking over the water, took in the red sunsets of winter; the long, low bridge that crawled across the Charles; the casual patches of ice and snow; the desolate suburban horizons, peeled and made bald by the rigor of the season; the general hard, cold void of the prospect; the extrusion, at Charlestown, of a few chimneys and steeples, straight, sordid tubes of factories and engine-shops, or spare, heavenward fingers of the New England meeting-house. There was something inexorable in the poverty of the scene, shameful in the meanness of its details, which gave a collective impression of boards and tin and frozen earth, sheds and rotting piles, railway-lines striding flat across a thoroughfare of puddles, and the tracks of the humble, the universal horse-car, traversing obliquely this path of danger; loose fences, vacant lots, mounds of refuse."

(I can recall traversing many times the identical landscape viewed from Olive's windows, in the days before the Cambridge Subway. Midway, among the factories and engine-shops, the sheds and rotting piles, the whole desolate suburban horizon, there used to be a great billboard beside the car-tracks on which was painted *"Boston: the Hub of the Universe."* )

The above description by James has so far mounted *crescendo* in a kind of ecstasy of distaste, completing itself in three combinations of words, the whole terminating in the ugly dissyllable: *refuse.* Then suddenly, and without any indentation, the savage melancholy of the passage alters into a very different *tempo.* . . . "But Verena thought the view lovely, and she was by no means without excuse when, as the afternoon closed, the ugly picture was tinted with a clear, cold rosiness. The air, in its windless chill, seemed to tinkle like a crystal, the faintest gradations of tone were perceptible in the sky, the west became deep and delicate, everything grew doubly distinct before taking on the dimness of evening. There were pink flushes on snow, tender reflections in patches of stiffened marsh, sounds of car-bells, no longer vulgar, but almost silvery on the long bridge, lonely outlines of distant, dusky undulations against the fading glow."

No contemporary writer can describe like that.

Edmund Wilson, in a brilliant study contributed to "The Question of Henry James," observes how often, in certain novels of James, "usually about half-way

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through," they run into sand; the excitement lapses; the color fades; the light dies, "and the ends are never up to the beginnings." Unhappily, "The Bostonians" is no exception to this rule. The *finale* of that novel, in fact, where Ransome snatches his mistress from the very jaws of a howling Boston audience, and Olive Chancellor flings herself at the feet of this or that female acquaintance, ending with the hero, is a long way off from the sublime and very close to the absurd. The action is all but impossible; the good taste extremely dubious; the tone all wrong. Olive is the only major character in the book who seems to possess any particular reality, for her young friend is only a charming water-color. A good deal of fuss has been made by one or two critics over the fact that her reality has a decidedly modern, not to say Sapphic tinge, that in her James has anticipated Proust as Balzac did in his picture of the intensely male homosexual presented as Vautrin. This opinion seems to me exaggerated. Henry James, though relatively unsure of himself as an artist in 1886, still knew what he was doing far better than his public, or than some of his modern critics. In the character of Miss Chancellor he was not so much drawing on the land "where the sea moans round Lesbian promontories," as he was depicting the born New Englander, male and female created He them, indigenous and everlasting, who are often celibates "as Shelley was a lyric poet or the month of August is sultry." The painful angularities of that incredible type, its tightness and rightness, its famous bluntness and honesty which are only lack of imagination, its unconscious pathos, have never been better rendered than in this distinguished though disappointing book.

CUTHBERT WRIGHT.

*Florestan—The Life and Works of Robert Schumann. Robert Haven Schauffler. Holt. $3.75.*

THIS is a biography of Schumann which comes at a time when it is much needed. Schumann's works are being widely played and are receiving more appreciation for the great works of the imagination that they are. Mr. Schauffler's biography is the work of a musician and a scholar who has done a vast work of research and compilation. There seems to be no end to the amount of material that he can quote or to the thoroughness and patience with which he will delve into Schumannianna. He thinks nothing of tracing a Schumann motive back three hundred years. He gives an exhaustive exposition of Schumann's relation to his wife, Clara, which has been done before but perhaps never with as judicious an attitude or with as much supporting evidence. One feels that the characterization of Clara as a brilliant virtuoso of narrow musical tastes but of superhuman energy and endurance is the true one.

The book is additionally satisfactory in that it has devoted sufficient space to Schumann's music. At least a third of the book is given to commentary on the works with bibliography, detail and listings which should be invaluable. If there is anything to criticize, it is in the style which sometimes gets a little beyond bounds: "It is one of the funniest [compositions] that Schumann ever perpetrated since those early days when his urchin pals stood about the keyboard doubled up with howls of mirth as their leader Robinson took off in tones the idiosyncracies of the members of that robber band." And again: "The part marked quasi oboe is irresistible when the instrument snickers up the scale staccato with its hand over its mouth."

MARGARET BYARD.


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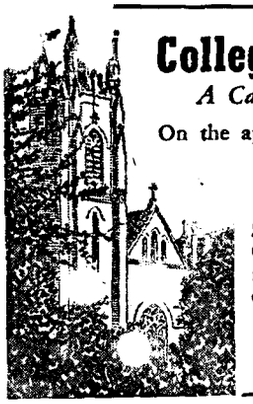

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# Next Week

**THE VOTE IN FRANCE,** by Paul Vignaux. What is the real meaning of the recent French election? Is it a victory for the Christian Democrats, the anti-Soviet political forces, the French Communists? Indeed the electoral results have been subject to a wide diversity of conflicting interpretations. That is why The Commonweal is happy to announce for next week an article just arrived from Paris by an old friend and competent on-the-spot observer.

**WITHOUT FANFARES,** by Dorothy Macardle, author of "The Irish Republic," and close friend of De Valera, is a charmingly informative account of the various steps toward virtual independence which Eire has registered during the past few years. "We had the Republic of our will and vision from 1916 to 1923, but it struggled unsuccessfully for recognition and a stable place in the international scheme. What we have today is substantial: a status and a Constitution—a freely-working democratic State."

Also comment of the week and analysis of the latest books, plays and movies.


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*John Henry Newman. John Moody. Sheed.* $3.75.
*John Henry Newman. Charles Frederick Harrold. Longmans.* $3.50.

THE centenary of John Henry Newman's conversion to the Catholic Church which fell on October 9th has given occasion to the two books under review. Mr. Moody, who is himself a convert, has produced a biography that fits its description by the publisher as an every-man's life of the Cardinal. Simply written and without display of erudition, it may indeed prove serviceable to many, yet it must be conceded that it adds little, either in the way of fact or of interpretation, to what has been said before of its subject. Its merit is to have paid equal attention to the two halves of Newman's life, the one passed within the Anglican, the other within the Catholic communion.

In Harrold's study one has to do with a work of mature scholarship. Though not technically a biography—only its first fifty-odd pages are that and of them no more than four treat the Catholic years of the Cardinal—it does succeed in giving an impression of the many interests that were Newman's. In successive chapters, each an entity in itself, all the major topics are discussed: the ideas of the "Essay on Development" and the "Grammar of Assent," the Cardinal's concept of liberal education, his historical and literary labors and, of course, the "Apologia." Patent throughout is the touch of the seasoned Newmanite who knows whereof he writes.

John Henry Newman has been a mystery to later generations because he was never quite at ease with his own; he seemed unconcerned with the common man and undisturbed over social inequalities. Yet Professor Harrold has shown that he did believe in a "democracy of the spirit far more revolutionary, if practiced, than any secular kind." It was upon the freeing of the heart and mind of man that the Cardinal was intent. To have caught this side of him and to have demonstrated his relevance for our own troubled age is an excellence of this volume.

While not himself a Catholic, the author has been happy in his handling of Catholic terms and doctrines. On rare occasions, of course, there have been slips: Ernest Renan has been made into a priest though the source said only that he wore a cassock; Alfred Loisy has been professed a Jesuit on no greater warrant than that Brémond and Tyrrell were members of the Society.

Harrold's "Newman" will not replace our standard studies of the Cardinal, but it will be used, long after this centennial year, as a balanced and penetrating introduction to the mind of a parson who became a prelate and passed from Oxford to Birmingham by way of Rome.

HENRY G. J. BECK.

## CONTRIBUTORS

*Rev. George H. DUNNE, S.J.,* wrote this article at our request, since both he and we feel that the subject to which it is dedicated is of tremendous political importance today. Father Dunne's views coincide very largely with our own. He is at present on the faculty of Loyola University of Los Angeles, Cal.

*Anne FREMANTLE* is at present residing in New York. We hope to publish more of these retrospective essays on literary figures of the not-too-distant past.

*E. V. R. WYATT* is the drama critic of the *Catholic World.*

*T. G. WAYNE* is the penname of a writer belonging to the Royal Navy, at present posted to America.

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